



## Happy Holidays and best wishes for 2024...



It's been a hectic year at Poco a Poco with many achievements that have improved the community and brought new opportunities.

Please keep reading to learn about the important work we've been doing and what's next.

Thanks to two of our supporters, **all donations made before the end of 2023 will be matched**. You can [click here for instructions on donating](#). We can also arrange to meet locally if that's easier.

**Canadian Donors:** You can now donate to us and receive a tax receipt! [Click here to email us](#) and receive more information.

### What Has Been Happening Since Our Last Newsletter?

We've been busy with the construction of the Community Center! Many pieces are coming together as more sections are built, and soon it will be ready to use. The following are just some of the recent developments since you last heard from us:

- The multi-purpose room is taking shape. Once this room is complete, it will have an extra fridge, freezer, and store items from the children's dining room.
- An underground cistern for water storage has been added. This will be filled up by a water truck since no pipes run into this part of town (yet!).
- The kitchen structure now has glass blocks in the roof for natural light and a roll-down metal window for the serving area.
- The kitchen floors and walls are now tiled and the serving counter is awaiting the final finishes.
- The metal door and windows in the kitchen will be installed within the next few weeks.
- Columns in the eating and program areas have been installed, and the concrete pad is done.
- The metal roof over the eating area will soon be added.
- Fencing has been installed around the property, including the south wall near the eating area.
- A retaining wall between the two levels is now in place, though still in progress.
- The septic system has been installed (thanks to St Andrew's Outreach Program!).
- The foundations of the two toilets have been dug (thanks to a generous donor and the San Diego Rotary Downtown Breakfast Club).

*Thanks to another kind donor, the kitchen is now equipped with stainless steel counters and sinks, and an oven will soon be added. Once electricity and pipes are connected, and we purchase an industrial fridge and stock pot oven, this room will be used five days a week to feed 120 children.*

*We've been amazed at the progress in such a short time!*

*We are so grateful to the many donors who have helped with this project. Special thanks to the Outreach program of the St Andrew's Anglican Church of Ajijic for their recent grants towards some of the costs, as well as to the San Diego Rotary Downtown Breakfast Club for their grant and ongoing support of our work.*

We need electricity adequately connected to the community center building, town water piped along the street, and the street leveled.

We met with the Mayor of Poncitlan in October to ask for the building permit and other requests but have not had any luck. Right now, we pay for electricity that is connected to a house one hundred yards away via a long wire. Not a great solution.

We need new electrical poles, a meter, and the appropriate wiring and panels installed on the street nearer our building. Since solar panels will be added later, we need 220 volts.

So, we will have to be patient.

Here you can see the kitchen with the roll down window in place, and the columns for the eating area structure. We hope to get a solar electric system installed on the upper level of the multi-purpose room, once that level is built. You can also see the concrete pad that was finished just before the open house.



## Open House

We held an open house on Saturday, December 2, to welcome visitors to see the work so far, and over 60 people showed up! Yes, it's still a construction site, but it's beginning to feel real!

We need to move the children's dining room as soon as possible, likely after Christmas, once the infrastructure is completed.





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## Current Needs

Of course, there are many things we still need, for instance:

- A submersible pump for the cistern to pump water to the toilets and kitchen.
- A small solar water heater to provide hot water in the kitchen for cleaning pots and pans more efficiently.
- Protective metal supports and wire/covering for the solar panels to protect them from damage.
- Two portable gas tanks for the kitchen area (as there are no fill up trucks available in the area that are capable of filling a larger tank).
- Tables and chairs for the eating area - for at least 50 children at each sitting.
- Knives, forks, spoons, melamine plates, and bowls for the children's kitchen.
- Plastic cups for drinks.
- Large drink dispensers are used to serve water-based drinks at meals.
- Regular donations of washing up liquid, floor cleaner, bleach, and washing supplies for the kitchen,
- Donations of food for feeding the kids.... 120 of them, five days a week.

We are looking to buy some good soil and plant bougainvillea plants on two sides of the property, as they will grow up the fence and become an additional layer of security for those areas.

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Since the Open House, the kitchen counter has been built (without the final finishing yet), and the concrete pad outside the kitchen has been done. The kitchen units are not installed yet but will be once we have the doors and windows to secure the room.



## Moving Ahead

Our next priority is building the two toilets, one being wheelchair accessible. We are so grateful to the San Diego Rotary Downtown Breakfast Club and the kind donor who made it possible to move ahead with this. With 120 children coming to eat food five days a week, adults attending various classes, visiting volunteers and donors - washrooms are rather essential!

After that, we plan to build the second level above the multi-purpose room for the medical and dental offices. This will place them at street level, making them more accessible. We will also need more security fencing and gates.

**Of course, donations are always appreciated - both financial and donated items.**

**Clothing, shoes, linens, household items, food, and medicines. If you are renovating, we can use whatever you don't need.**

**[Just contact us!](#)**

Just in case you, your family or friends get **iPads** for Christmas, would you consider donating the old ones to us so that we can use them for data collection? All the organizations that Anita deals with want information on the people they help. So data capture is essential.

We are also in the last stages of finally becoming an official Mexican charity. Then we will be required to document names of everyone we help for our official reports. If this data can be electronically entered by the program leaders on iPads and uploaded from there, this will help our reporting to be more accurate and efficient. Thank you!

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## Thanks to Everyone Who Helps

We are ***incredibly grateful to all the amazing volunteers*** who make up Poco a Poco. A special thanks go to coordinators Mary-Ellen, Janet, Rita, David, Doris, Francisco, Kari, and especially Anita Torres. Anita works with so many organizations besides us - her workload would make your head spin!

A special thank you to the wonderful donors, supporters, and organizations who are helping this area.

We all wish you a very happy and prosperous 2024.  
If you wish to donate to us, please [click here to donate](#).

Thank you!



**Merry Christmas and Feliz Navidad from us all at Poco a Poco San Pedro!**

[www.pocoapocosanpedro.com](http://www.pocoapocosanpedro.com)

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